



Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive
DSpace Repository

History of Naval Postgraduate School

Biographies

1983-05

In Our Midst: Mrs. John J . Ekelund

Classmate Magazine; Brown, Vickey

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/59520>

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

In Our Midst

by Vickey Brown

"Just another coffee," I muttered to myself as I drove through the rain to the O'Club, "another coffee where I'll listen to the same boring speeches, see the same people, and eat the same little cookies they always have." I gave one last resigned sigh before parking the car, and putting on my best company smile and name tag, committed myself to another evening of ennui.

The evening progressed much as I had imagined, and then, it happened. It was a petite, bright vision of what my mother once defined as a complete lady. She rose, walked to the center of the room, shunning the safety of the rostrum, and smiled. It was the smile that got me, for unlike my own pasted-on version, hers was real. The smile began to open as she sang "Getting To Know You". When the singer had finished her song, she began to speak directly and simply of her life as an officer's wife, offering herself and her life as a teacher and a witness to her faith. When the evening ended I left unexpectedly reluctant; yet somehow saddened that so few had shared this opportunity to meet this very special lady.

When the focus for this issue was announced, there was no question with whom I would seek an interview. I welcomed the chance to get to know her so that others might too. It is with great personal pleasure to introduce Mrs. Lynn Ekelund, mother of seven children and Navy Wife Extraordinaire. Rather than tell you more about her, I shall let her words speak for themselves.

Q. "Mrs. Ekelund, how did you meet your husband? Did you come from a family with a military background?"

A. "We were introduced by my sister, or rather his sister who is also a Navy wife. He was a slow talker, so I finally asked him, 'When are we going to get married?' I guess you could say I proposed to him (it's the truth, go ahead—Adm. E.) He said yes . . . since then there's never been a dull moment!"

A military family? . . . not really. I've only recently learned that my family was descended from Adm. Mayo who served under Adm. King, but no, the military life was new to me."

Q. "What was the greatest adjustment you made in becoming a military wife?"

A. "For years I was anxious about entertaining. That was the hardest. It's hard until you jump in and do it, then it's fun. To me, having people into your home, sharing this part of your life with them, is the greatest compliment you

can pay them. It doesn't have to be elaborate . . . with seven children having company was difficult. They often spent that time with a babysitter. I learned to enjoy the comradery . . . but first you have to ask, to have them in, and let them relax with you. It has its benefits. It was a good family support system, especially later when the men were away. That was an adjustment, too."

"I love the deployments! I had a chance to be myself, a chance to be only me, and to do the things I wanted. It was a growing time, a time to reflect on who I was and what I wanted to do with my life without the extra duties of being a wife. Meals became simpler with only the children to feed. My thoughts and letters became deeper, more . . . clairvoyant. But then, his deployments weren't all that long. It was better for me than for many others, and yet it did take extra effort to keep things going by myself."

"It takes effort to be a Navy wife. My husband was in subs and we were only able to send one 30-word Family Gram a month. I learned to get the most out of those thirty words. Once he was in Alaskan waters and our son had pneumonia...with thirty words I couldn't tell him much, even when our son was close to death. I learned I could do it by myself, but it had its cost . . . by the time the sub returned my son was recuperating, but I had lost a lot of weight. I

looked like a wraith standing at the dock when the sub returned."

Q. Your husband served in Korea and Vietnam. What helped you survive these wars? What helped you cope with this extra stress?"

A. "First of all you need a good support system. All of the children were at home. We picked a special neighborhood (Oxen Hill, MD) where we had friends, church, and volunteer activities to keep me busy. I became almost a civilian. I didn't get involved with the wives club . . . it was too big . . . with my husband gone we were an oddity. It was fun to feel like a civilian again. My faith was also a source of strength.

Q. "Mrs. Ekelund, you raised seven children. How did you manage it? Do you think they grew up normally despite the military lifestyle, or did they suffer because of it?"

A. "We didn't encourage too many outside activities . . . we tried not to get, well, overextended. We believe in lots of free-play time for children. Each child had his one activity; Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, so juggling the kids and activities was easy. Kent, our youngest, is attending Monterey High and is still at home with us, so actually our life is still much the same: the nest isn't empty yet."

"On the whole, our children grew up normally. I tried at times, but wasn't both parents. I never wanted to be both. The

LOCAL AREA FIREARMS SPECIALISTS

BUY, SELL & TRADE
QUALITY FIREARMS

10% OFF ON ANY
NON-SALE ITEM
WITH THIS AD

COMPUTERIZED AUTO ALARMS

U.S. ORDNANCE, Inc.

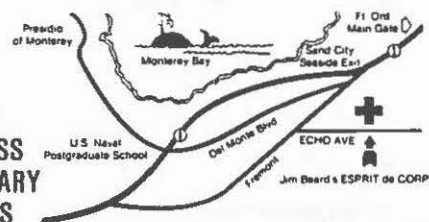
455 RESERVATION RD. • MARINA • 384-6321



1191 Echo Ave.
Seaside, CA 93955
(408) 394-0211
M-F 9-6, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5

WE BUY
USED DRESS
BLUE MILITARY
UNIFORMS

Silk-screened Shirts & Hats • Trophies & Computerized Engravings • Military Plaques Our Specialty with Logos • Sewing & Alterations • Plastic Name Plates • Miniature Medals Remounted • Navy Mess Dress Uniforms & Accessories.





older children, from the absence of their father, adjusted, and are probably stronger for it, but it did penalize them. Their father's absence wasn't as hard on the younger ones, except for the year he was in Vietnam. We spent most of their growing years together."

"The (transient) lifestyle affected some of our children more than others. Our second child, Chris, has returned to his birthplace, San Diego, to settle into a civilian life. He works for a mortgage firm and will probably not move again. Overall, the children now see advantages to having moved."

"I do believe they sometimes suffered academically. Peter, our fourth child, attended a different high school for each of his last four years of school. (In June, Peter will report to OCS in Newport, RI.) It was especially difficult in the elementary school years. We sent them to private Catholic school when we were in Hawaii rather than allow them to attend the

public schools which weren't very good. Later, in Norfolk, we couldn't do that. They didn't teach them anything during those six years . . . oh, I have no proof. They (the children) compensated."

"It was also difficult for them to participate in sports and other school activities like that. When you haven't played with the team since your freshman year and you're a new senior in the school, the coach tends to make you sit on the bench. Don't get the wrong impression . . . it wasn't always easy for them, but, on the whole, I think it didn't hurt them. There were many compensations."

Ode To Family Life

*To home cooked meals and memories,
To ever present rivalry,
To simple chores and many laughs
At funny happenings in the past,
To the basic elements of change
Like graduations, wedding bells, and
the simpler things,*

*Thanks to a family safe and strong
For all the love I've had so long.*

"Tracy, our kindergarten teacher, wrote this during a visit home, so it couldn't have been all bad. Tracy (the fifth child) lives with her younger sister, Tricia, in Key West and near their older sister Terri. Terri was the first of our children to "Go Navy." She's a JG (VA45) and her big brother, John Jr., made JG in mid-March. Joey is stationed aboard the U.S.S. Dubuque, and he and his wife, Nancy, are expecting our first grandchild in May."

Q. "Many military families today find it hard to make ends meet without a second income, without the wife going to work outside the home. How did the Ekelunds manage raising seven children on a military salary?"

A. "We got by with less; we're always behind the fads . . . we were frugal. Our families were not what you would call

A. "Have confidence in yourself . . . believe in yourself. All of us have talents, resources, and capabilities; everyone has them though each of us are different. Play your talent up; from there it is easy. Make the first step: do what only you can do best. The other piece of advice I'd offer is to have a sense of humor . . . to keep a sense of humor . . . in other words, to be able to laugh at mistakes. Don't take yourself too seriously. This is really for anyone, not just the younger wives, I follow it all the time . . . we all are forever reaching forks in the road in our lives; if we can we should face them with confidence and humor. It's a way of showing we like ourselves." □

I think the advantages and reasons for going to school far outweigh the disadvantages. So why not get educated yourself while your husband/wife gets his/her education? You have very little to lose and a lot to gain when you become a "coed." □



*The First
Southern
Baptist Church
of the
Monterey Peninsula*


**1030 HILBY AVENUE
SEASIDE**

Associate Pastor, Dr. Tom de Graaf

<p>SUNDAY SCHEDULE BIBLE STUDY 9 30 AM MORNING WORSHIP 11 AM EVENING WORSHIP 7 PM WEDNESDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES BEGINS AT 5 30 PM</p>
--

**NURSERY AVAILABLE ALL SERVICES
FOR INFORMATION CALL:**

394-4447



Zepeda's

RESTAURANT

Authentic

MEXICAN DISHES

- SPECIALIZING IN -
- COMBINATION DINNERS
- TAMALES • TACOS
- CHILI RELLENOS
- ENCHILADAS
- WINES & BEER

MEXICAN DISHES
TO TAKE
OUT


OPEN DAILY

EXCEPT TUESDAY


FRI-SAT 11 AM-10 PM

SUN-THURS 11 AM-9 PM

SEMI - PRIVATE ROOM AVAILABLE



372-4851



1 1/2 BLOCK FROM
MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER

DEL MONTE

FRANKLIN

PACIFIC

CASA FUENTE BLDG.

435 PIERCE ST.

MONTEREY

435 PIERCE
PARKING IN
NEW MUNICIPAL
GARAGE

NEXT TO CASA SERRANO